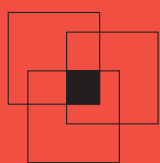




International
Labour
Organization



Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on CHILD LABOUR



ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office for India

International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)

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FOREWORD

Recent ILO global estimates point to an overall decline in the number of child labourers aged 5-17 by 47 million, from 215 to 168 million. Significantly, most of the progress has been achieved between the period 2008-2012 – a period of global economic downturn that could have triggered an increase in child labour as vulnerable families pushed into poverty grappled to make ends meet. This reduction in child labour is the outcome of sustained and broad-ranging multi-stakeholder action including increased attention, commitment and ownership by governments; sound legislative and policy interventions particularly in the domains of education and social protection.

Among the broad-based social protection instruments, public employment programmes are emerging as key mechanisms that have the potential to reduce households' reliance on child labour with their goals of providing employment to adults, helping to create or rehabilitate public infrastructure and expanding basic services. While few public employment programmes have been evaluated from a child labour perspective, initial global evidence suggests that public employment programmes can indeed contribute to reducing child labour. However two critical caveats are pertinent: public employment must not allow the employment of children; and adequate planning must be effected so children do not end up either replacing participating parents in their jobs or in performing household chores including childcare, thereby depriving them from going to school

Child labour is driven by economic and social vulnerabilities associated with a host of interrelated factors such as unemployment, ill health, disability, old age, conflict and natural events. Therefore ILO posits, that there is a need to address the myriad range of contingencies associated with child labour through an integrated systems approach in accordance with prevailing national and local specificities, duly premised on a child-sensitive rights-based approach.

India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is such a policy intervention that has immense potential for transforming the lives of impoverished and socially excluded families and children. It is particularly significant as it: prohibits the employment of children below the age of 18 years in any work under the scheme (thereby raising the standard regarding the employment of children above the national one); encourages the participation of disadvantaged women addressing prevalent



gender-based discrimination against women in employment while keeping in mind women's care economy roles by requiring the establishment of childcare facilities at worksites to facilitate their inclusion and mitigating the likelihood of children dropping out of school for household and care work; views employment and income generation as a right and not an ancillary outcome of the overall development process, thereby placing direct obligations and accountability on the public system; and encourages convergence of other existing public social protection schemes for optimal impact.

These are all necessary ingredients that could lead to the progressive elimination of child labour in India. Most certainly the ensuing study indicates that additional income from MGNREGA employment is contributing to improving the educational and health status of children. However the study also shows there are challenges. For example, despite the legal ban, adolescent children are found working at MGNREGA sites for various reasons, albeit in small numbers; they are dropping out of school to support parents in household chores and many small children are found at worksites with little or no care facility posing health, safety and well-being concerns. As other research has indicated, none of these issues are insurmountable, what is required is concerted action to address them with the array of existing child-focused programmes.

Mahatma Gandhi stated: “(T)he difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems.” The challenge now is to close this difference. We hope this study contributes to the debate and inspires further resolve and action to tap existing capabilities and potential so evidently inherent in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to stem child labour in India.



Tine Staermose
Director,
ILO DWT for South Asia
and ILO Country Office for India

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The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), launched in 2005, is one of the most ambitious centrally sponsored schemes of India. Its scale and complexities continue to test the strength and creativity of India's public systems in new and existing ways. Recognizing that state governments are likely to adopt it differently because of the diversity of the country, the scheme has allowed state administrations a fair amount of autonomy in its implementation.

Among the host of outcomes the MGNREGS has had or is projected to have on the lives of men, women and families overall, that have been the subject of considerable analysis in the past few years; MGNREGS can also have significant impact on the well-being of children, an area not so well researched. To this end, the Institute for Human Development (IHD) was approached by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to examine the incidence of child labour in MGNREGS and to study the socioeconomic conditions facing households that send their children for work and the reasons thereof. The study also attempted to investigate the effects of the additional income generated through the MGNREGS works on the healthcare and education of children.

We are thankful to the ILO for entrusting this study to us particularly Mr Mukesh Gupta, Senior Specialist, Employment Intensive Investments, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia, and Ms Preet Verma, National Project Manager, Convergence Child Labour Project, ILO Country Office for India, for evincing a keen interest in the study and offering recommendations during various stages of this project. The suggestions of Mr Wahidur Rahman of ILO-IPEC, Geneva, helped us tremendously in formulating the study design and our interactions with him were always inspiring. Similarly Mr Narasimhan Gadiraju, Project Officer, Convergence Child Labour Project, ILO Office for India, not only participated in discussions at various stages, but also offered extensive support to the study.

We received immense cooperation from various officials in the surveyed districts, and would like to especially thank the Chief Development Officers of Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts, and the Project Directors and District Programme Coordinators of MGNREGS in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu. The Block Development Officers/Programme Officers of the MGNREGS and the *Gram Panchayat* (GP) heads of the surveyed villages also collaborated extensively in conducting this study. In the course of



the fieldwork, we met a number of officials, representatives of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs), and various other people, who enriched our understanding of the local contexts, difficulties in implementing MGNREGS, and the conditions facing children. We are sincerely thankful to all these individuals.

Last but not least, I would like to congratulate the research and field team for their efforts in completing the study with sincerity and full devotion.

Alakh N. Sharma
Director
Institute for Human Development

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ABBREVIATIONS

GP	<i>Gram Panchayat</i>
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IHD	Institute for Human Development
INR	Indian Rupee
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO)
LIC	Life Insurance Corporation
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MMS	Mid-day Meal Scheme
MPCE	Monthly Per-capita Expenditure
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
OBCs	Other Backward Castes
PRIs	<i>Panchayati Raj</i> Institutions
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SSA	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</i>
STs	Scheduled Tribes
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UP	Uttar Pradesh

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The salience of child well-being in India's development architecture is well known. India has several targeted and universal social protection programmes to protect and support people from their "cradle to grave." These include child-focused social protection programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-day Meal Scheme (MMS), and so on. Given its overarching objective to alleviate poverty, the MGNREGS can have a significant impact on the well-being of children. MGNREGS is the most important rights-based social protection programme in India that has demonstrated varying degrees of success across the country. If harnessed optimally, MGNREGS, by improving the right of women and men to employment, can in turn enhance the rights of children. There have been many evaluations of the employment, infrastructural and social impacts of MGNREGS among others but there are hardly any systematic studies relating to the effect of the scheme on children.

In this context, the Institute for Human Development was approached by ILO to examine the incidence of child labour in MGNREGS and **to study the socioeconomic conditions facing households that send their children for work and the reasons thereof. Furthermore to examine the effects of the additional income generated through the MGNREGS on the healthcare and education of children.**

The study is primarily based on a survey conducted at MGNREGS worksites in a total of four districts (two from each state) in the states of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the north and Tamil Nadu in the south. In addition to the survey, interviews with 400 workers were also carried out to generate data for the study (please see full research methodology in Chapter 1 below).

The summary of findings of the study is given below:

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005, enforced in 2005 and extended to all districts in India in 2008, has potential and demonstrable positive impacts on curtailing the practice of child labour in India. There is no incidence of child labour in the age group of 5-14 years in the MGNREGS, **though there were cases of adolescents working in MGNREGS.** Out of the 1,249 workers present at worksites, **three in the Mirzapur district** of UP and **one in the Pudukottai district** of Tamil Nadu were below the age of 18 years.

- However, from the detailed interviews of 400 workers with children below the age of 18 years, **32 households (including 15 in Lalitpur, 7 in Mirzapur, 9 in Nagapattinam and 1 in Pudukottai)** reported that their children aged 15-17 years had worked in the MGNREGS at some point of time. **Notwithstanding this finding is limited to the study jurisdictions only and should not be generalized.**
- Out of the 32 households which reported their children to be working, 17 had **worked along with their parents to support them** in earning minimum wages that are paid according to the task rate system. Five were **sent by the parents to earn for the family** and two had **worked as proxy workers** for their parents. Six of them had got **job cards prepared in the names of their adolescents**. Another two reported that since their **children do not go to school**, they are sent to work.
- **Reasons for employing children** under the MGNREGS varied across the districts. In Lalitpur district, 11 households reported that their children worked to support parents at the worksites. Two households reported that they send their children to earn for the family while another two claimed that as their children do not attend school, they are sent to work for the family. In Mirzapur, the proxy factor and supporting parents in earning minimum wages were the main reasons for the incidence of adolescent labour.
- In Nagapattinam district, six of the families reported that they had got separate job cards for the adolescents; of these, two were sent by their parents to earn for their families, while one worked to support the parents in earning minimum wages. In Pudukottai district, only one such case was reported.
- The number of households reporting children (below 18 years) working in MGNREGS is not high, but the number of households reporting children working elsewhere is relatively high at 23.8 per cent. The proportions of households of MGNREGS workers reporting incidence of working children were high in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts of UP but the corresponding percentages of such households in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu was comparatively lower. Most of these children were working in agriculture either as casual workers or on their own farms. Some of them were also found to be working in non-agriculture sectors.
- In the Mirzapur and Lalitpur districts, where the incidence of working children was higher than in other districts, about three-fourths of such children were employed in agricultural activities and one-fourth in non-agriculture. However, in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts, the child workers were mostly employed in the non-agriculture sectors.
- Across the four surveyed districts, most of the children were working in their villages, since they are mostly employed in agricultural work. However those who were working in non-agriculture sectors were found to be commuting outside their villages.

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- A significant number of the surveyed households reported that their children had been working prior to the commencement of the MGNREGS. The percentage of such households was very high in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts particularly at 50 per cent and 58 per cent respectively.
 - In the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts, on the other hand, the number of households reporting the incidence of children working before the commencement of the MGNREGS was low (only 4 per cent). Most of these children were working in agriculture and mostly in their native villages.
 - **MGNREGS and its impact on children:** The overall income earned by workers through the MGNREGS is too small to have a significant impact on child well-being indicators like health and education. A large number of the households spend the additional income earned through the MGNREGS on meeting basic necessities such as food and clothing, among other things.
 - Nevertheless, despite the meager earnings of households through the MGNREGS, these workers have presented a tendency to accord priority to the education and healthcare of their children based on the increased income generated. Households with relatively better economic conditions were found to be spending more of their additional income on healthcare and education of their children.
 - About 50 per cent of the households of MGNREGS workers reported a **change in the educational status** of their children subsequent to the onset of the MGNREGS. The percentage of such households was higher in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts than in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts.
 - The reported change in the educational status of children in Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu were due to various factors. **Firstly**, the average income base of households of the MGNREGS workers in these two districts was relatively higher than in the other districts surveyed. **Secondly**, the average MGNREGS earnings of these households were higher than elsewhere. **Thirdly**, the relatively higher level of literacy and human development in these two districts also contributed to the change in educational status. This in turn has resulted in the tendency to accord priority to the healthcare and education of children.
 - In contrast to the situation in the districts of Tamil Nadu, only one-third of the households of MGNREGS workers in UP with children below the age of 18 years reported a **change in the educational status** of their children post MGNREGS roll-out. The main reasons for this were their low average earnings under the MGNREGS and the low income base of these households. Due to the low level of their incomes, they spend the additional income first on food and other non-food consumption items, and only after that on other elements. Nevertheless, about one-third of these households reported a change in the educational status of their children after the initiation of the MGNREGS.

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- Apart from increase in the **expenditure on education** of their children, these households also demonstrated two other noticeable types of changes: they started sending their children to schools; and a number of them who were already sending their children to schools now started sending them to better schools.
 - In both the districts of Uttar Pradesh, parents who reported a change in the educational status of their children after the advent of the MGNREGS claimed that they had started sending both their sons and daughters to schools. Very few of the households in UP reported sending their children to better schools. In contrast, in both the districts of Tamil Nadu, many parents reported upgrading their children's schools. As such in UP, additional income allowed parents to send their children to schools in the first place, in Tamil Nadu, the additional income facilitated sending children to improved schools as they were already enrolled in schools earlier.
 - The items pertaining to education on which most of the households incurred expenditure included books, uniforms, school fees, private tuition, and the additional fees incurred on upgrading schools.
 - About 42 per cent of households started **spending more on the health** of their children after receiving additional income from employment in MGNREGS. The percentage of such households was higher in the Mirzapur and Lalitpur districts of UP than in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu.
 - A few of the households of the MGNREGS workers were also found to be saving some money (**child well-being measures**) for the future of their children. About one-fourth of these households saved by investing in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) policies while another 14 per cent directly enhanced savings in their banks or in cash. The percentage of households that reported saving by investing in LIC policies was higher in the surveyed districts of Tamil Nadu than in UP.
 - There was general acknowledgement among the households of MGNREGS workers that the MGNREGS had contributed significantly in augmenting the overall well-being of these households. About 86 per cent of the households in Pudukottai, 73 per cent in Mirzapur, 69 per cent in Lalitpur, and 52 per cent in Nagapattinam pointed to improvement in their standard of living.

1 CURRENT SCENARIO, STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1. Definition and dimensions of child labour

The issue of child labour has been in the global public domain since the early nineteenth century with the United Kingdom taking the lead in starting a public debate.¹ Since then, child labour has been a central issue in public policy, legislative/constitutional regimes, the international human rights and development frameworks and the decent work agenda. Child labour is increasingly addressed as a violation of children's fundamental rights to optimal development and protection from economic exploitation as enshrined in universal instruments and standards established specifically in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989, ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) as well as a socioeconomic imperative for a country's growth and development.

1.1 Definition

The definition of child labour varies in accordance with the context and criteria applied to the subject. Any definition of the term 'child labour' is related to two components, that is, the 'child' in terms of his/her chronological age and 'labour' in terms of its nature, quantum, and income generation capacity.²

Article 1 of the UNCRC defines everyone under the age of 18 years as a child. It lays down a detailed charter of children's social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights and mandates their protection from any practice prejudicial to their rights. Article 32 of the Convention obliges states parties to proscribe children from working in any condition that is likely to be hazardous, or interfere with their education, or be harmful for their health, physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) classifies child labour by drawing upon ILO Convention No. 138, Convention No. 182, and the UN CRC. This classification includes three types of work in age groups as follows:

¹ G. K. Lieten (2005), "Child Labour and Work: Numbers from the General to the Specific", *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Volume 48 No 2, 2005.

² P.P. Jayanti (1998), "Child Labour A Socio-Legal Study", Vol.I *Kerala University Journal of Legal Studies*, Department of Law, University of Kerala, Tiruvantapuram, p.143.

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- a) all children aged 5-11 years engaged in economic activity are considered to comprise child labour that requires elimination;
 - b) children aged 12-14 years performing economic activities are considered to comprise child labour unless they are engaged in light work;
 - c) children aged 15-18 years engaged in the worst forms of labour are to be “categorized as child labourers”.³

India acceded to the UNCRC in December 1992, but has not yet ratified either ILO Convention No. 138 or Convention No. 182. Nevertheless, India has enacted several legislative provisions that need to be interpreted in detail in order to define child labour. The Constitution of India contains both positive and negative provisions related to child labour. Article 24 of the Indian Constitution prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory, mine or hazardous employment. Article 21A of the Indian Constitution contains a positive provision and provides for free and compulsory education of all children aged 6-14 years. To give effect to this constitutional provision the Parliament of India passed the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 for extending universal access to education to children up to the age of 14 years. As such the law has a direct bearing on child labour. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 sets out a comprehensive provision pertaining to the prohibition of child labour and defines a child as “a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age” and prohibits the employment of children in certain occupations and processes listed in Schedule Parts A and B. This Act defines an adolescent as a person “who has completed his fourteenth year of age but has not completed his eighteenth year.”

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005 prohibits the employment of a person below 18 years of age in the public works carried out under the programme. In other words, this Act considers a person who has completed 18 years of age as an adult and is more closely aligned with international standards regulating child labour, especially hazardous forms of labour.

This study examines the incidence of child labour under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which does not allow for the employment of a person below 18 years of age. Therefore, this study considers any person below 18 years of age as a child labourer as per the provisions of the MGNREGS. However, keeping in mind the universal practices and definition of child labour as laid down by the ILO and the laws enacted by the Government of India, this study classifies persons below the age of 18 years into two categories: 5-14 years, and 15-17 years. The latter category

³ ILO/IPEC-SIMPOC (2007), *Towards an internationally accepted statistical definition of child labour: children’s activities and their definitions*, Geneva. Accessed on 15 April at <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/download.do%3Ftype%3Ddocument%26id%3D7871>.



comprises of adolescents who are allowed to work in non-hazardous industries and occupations.

1.2 Dimensions of child labour in India

The incidence of child labour exists across all states in India in varying degrees. In terms of the demographic share, children constitute more than one-third (37 per cent) of the total population of the country while working children constitute 18.4 per cent of the total children in the age group of 15-17 years (adolescents).⁴ According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) estimates, in 2009-10, around 6 per cent of the children in the age group of 5-17 years and 3.3 per cent in the age group of 5-14 years were working. The incidence of working children in the older age group (15-17 years) was significantly higher (18.4 per cent).

In terms of inter-state variation, the incidence of child labour is higher in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in southern India, West Bengal and Odisha in eastern India, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the Hindi heartland, and Rajasthan and Gujarat in western India (NSSO, 2009-10). The incidence was found to be higher in the rural than in urban areas.

In rural areas, the incidence of working children is mainly observed in agriculture and services. In agriculture, children work mostly in farms, dairy, fisheries and poultry farming, while in services, they mostly work in occupational services such as barbers, cobblers, domestic workers, in hotels and restaurants, in home-based industries and construction. In urban areas, they work mostly in manufacturing, construction, trade, hotels and restaurants, and shops.

India, like many other countries around the world has witnessed a decrease in the incidence of child labour (5-14 years) from 8.3 million in 2004-05 to 4.5 million in 2009-10 (NSSO) that can be attributed to the various legislative (noted in section 1.1 above), policy, institutional and programmatic interventions put in place that include the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights that aims at the prevention of child labour As well as other welfare and poverty alleviation measures that have contributed to the reduction in the incidence of child labour. Notwithstanding the perceptible decline in the incidence of child labour, the very fact that it prevails across all states in spite of legal bans, starting as young as five years old is a matter of concern.

Among the major policy interventions in this direction during recent years, the MGNREGS is considered as an important milestone. However, unlike the other specific child labour related policy interventions, the MGNREGS inherently entails the risk of increasing the incidence of child labour, despite its higher standard of banning the

⁴ National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), 66th Round Survey (2009-10), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.



employment of children under 18 years of age. This study aims to examine both the positive and negative impacts of the MGNREGS on the incidence of child labour in India.

2. MGNREGS and child labour

The MGNREGA 2005 initiated implementation in the more backward districts of India in 2006 and was extended to all districts with effect from 1 April, 2008. The main objective of the Act is to provide a 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Although there are other aims of the Act, the core objective is ensuring a minimum income guarantee to rural households.

The work programme implemented under the MGNREGA is massive. About five *crore*⁵ households have been provided employment almost every year since 2008. Some 209.3 *crores* of employment days were generated during the year 2011-12. Almost half (48 per cent) of the total number of employment days were earned by women, and the proportion of women's share in the total number of person-days was higher in a number of states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh, among others. A large number of the beneficiaries of wage employment are Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), landless and marginal farmers, and casual agriculture and non-agriculture workers. The incidence of child labour in India has been found to be higher among these households than others. Further, the level of education among these households is also low.

The implementation of MGNREGS has led to demonstrable impacts on the socioeconomic conditions of rural households, as well as on agriculture, the local economy, decentralized development, and women's empowerment. It has also been observed that the programme has had some very subtle impacts. For example, a number of MGNREGS worker households, in particular women workers, have been found to be spending a certain proportion of their incomes on healthcare and education for their children.⁶ Also, the increased level of household income encourages some of these households to withdraw their children from the labour market. In a study of a village in Gujarat, Hirway, *et al.*,⁷ have shown that apart from the multiplier effects on household production, income and employment, and the village economy; the work performed under the MGNREGS would also enable children to attend school regularly. This study has

⁵ One *crore* is equivalent to 10 million.

⁶ Pankaj, Ashok and Rukmini Tankha (2010), "Empowerment Effects of the MGNREGS on Women Workers: A Study in Four States", *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW), July 24, vol xlv, no 30.

⁷ Hirway, Indira (2009), "Engendering Public Works Programme by Addressing Unpaid Work of Women in Developing Countries: A Case Study in India", presented in Workshop *Changing Gender Relations and Women's Empowerment-NREGA Implementation in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh* organized by Institute for Human Development and United Nations Development Fund for Women, New Delhi.



also demonstrated that the programme registration reduces the probability of a boy entering child labour by 13.4 percentage points. Uppal,⁸ on the other hand, has shown that the income-generating effects of the programme are likely to reduce the incidence of child labour by 8.9 percentage points for girls.

The reduction of 3.8 million child labourers as discussed above, especially during the period 2004-05 to 2009-10, has primarily occurred in the rural areas, and can be attributed to a number of interventions made by the Government of India including the Mid-day Meal Scheme (MMS), the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), and the MGNREGS. While the MMS and SSA encourage a high level of enrolment of children in school, thereby reducing their chances of participation in the labour market, the MGNREGS increases the income level of the rural households, consequently encouraging more and more parents to withdraw their children from the labour market.

However, it has been observed that though the MGNREGA strictly prohibits employment of persons below the age of 18 years, it also has the opposite potential of boosting the incidence of child labour in India ostensibly triggered by the increased employment and income opportunities offered by the Act. Further, it has been observed that poor parents, who are engaged in alternative employment, send their children as proxy workers to perform MGNREGA work. In a few cases, the children were also found to be helping their parents in earning minimum wages due to the enforcement of the task-based wage rate system under the Act. In this context, it is important to examine the impact of MGNREGS on child well-being.

3. Objectives of the study

The aims of the study are:

- to examine the incidence of child labour in the MGNREGS, that is, to investigate if children work as proxy workers or alongside their family members under the MGNREGS;
- to assess the impact of MGNREGS on the incidence of child labour;
- to study the socioeconomic conditions of the households that send their children for work and the reasons thereof;

⁸ Uppal Vinayak (2009), *Young Lives Student Paper: Is the NREGS a Safety Net for Children? Studying the access to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for the Young Lives families and its impact on child outcomes in Andhra Pradesh*, thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MSc in Economics for Development at the University of Oxford, UK.

- to identify the incidence of and gender dimensions of the children of MGNREGS workers staying at home to take care of younger siblings or to undertake domestic chores in case parents have joined MGNREGS work;
- to examine the effects of the generation of additional income through the MGNREGS on the healthcare and education of children, particularly in terms of increased enrolment, attendance and retention in school; and
- to suggest measures for checking the incidence of child labour under the MGNREGS and other measures for promoting the overall well-being of children.

4. Methodology and sample selection

This study is primarily based on a survey conducted at the MGNREGS worksites in two states of India including a relatively underdeveloped state from the north and a relatively developed one from the south. However, available secondary data on child labour have also been used to understand the overall situation of child labour in India and to contextualize the study with relevant secondary information. This study defines child labour as working children below the age of 18 years, as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in accordance with the provision of the MGNREGA that prohibits the employment of persons below the age of 18 years. However, for purposes of analysis, this study has classified working children into two categories: 5-14 years and 15-17 years (adolescents). The chances of employment of children aged 5-14 years are negligible in the case of MGNREGS due to the very nature of the work.

4.1 Selection of states

For the purpose of the study, all the states were first divided into two groups primarily on the basis of the implementation status of the MGNREGS. The first group of states consists of high performers like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, while the second group consists of low performers like Uttar Pradesh (UP), Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. The high-performer and low-performer states were classified on the basis of the average number of person-days worked. Then from each group of high performers, one state was selected on the basis of criteria like overall respective human development status of the state, the incidence of child labour, and the regional representation of the state from both the north and the south. Thus, UP from the north and Tamil Nadu from the south were selected for the study. Although the sample is not fully representative, the two selected states largely represent the north and south, respectively. Efforts were also made to avoid selection of extremes, that is, the highest and the lowest performers in each region.

4.2 Selection of districts

During the second stage of sampling, two districts from each state were selected on the basis of two main considerations: (a) the incidence of child labour, and (b) the level of employment generation under the MGNREGS. The incidence of child labour was mapped by using the school drop-out ratio and workforce participation rate of children as proxy indicators. As regards employment generation, the average number of person-days worked per household and the average number of employment days worked by women were used as the basis of selecting districts. In line with the above indicators, all the districts of the two selected states were filtered and then the filtered districts were ranked for each indicator. A final composite rank was also prepared. All the districts of each selected state were then grouped into high, middle and low categories on the basis of the composite rank. Finally, one district from among the high-rankers and another district from among the low-rankers were selected from each state. Thus, Mirzapur and Lalitpur from UP, and Nagapattinam and Pudukottai from Tamil Nadu were selected for the study (Tables 1 and 2 in the Annex). A brief profile of the selected districts on the basis of The Census of India, 2011 is given in Table 3 in the Annex.

4.3 Selection of blocks/Gram Panchayats/worksites

From each selected district, two blocks were chosen on the basis of characteristics like the level of implementation of the MGNREGS, the overall development of the block, the representation of SC, ST and OBC populations in the block, and the availability of active worksites in the block. In the case of UP, due to non-availability of active worksites, the worksite samples were taken from three instead of two blocks. A total of 10 worksites, including five worksites each from two *Gram Panchayats* (GPs) from each block were selected. In the case of Tamil Nadu, however, the worksites were chosen only from two blocks, as active worksites were available in a large number in the state.

Table 1.1. Distribution of household samples

State	District	Block	GP	Worksites	Workers listed	Households with children
1. UP	Mirzapur	1	4	8	87	40
		2	4	8	44	40
		3	2	4	73	20
	Lalitpur	1	4	8	113	40
		2	4	8	45	40
		3	2	4	94	20
		Sub-total		6	20	40

State	District	Block	GP	Worksites	Workers listed	Households with children
2. Tamil Nadu	Nagapattinam	1	4	10	194	50
		2	4	10	201	50
	Pudukottai	1	4	10	179	50
		2	5	10	219	50
Sub-total		4	17	40	793	200
Grand total		10	37	80	1249	400

In the case of UP, due to the non-availability of five active worksites in a GP (the original sample design), the samples were chosen from more than two GPs in each selected block. However, in Tamil Nadu, generally five worksites were found in one or two GP(s), but wherever they were not found, the number of GPs were increased. In a sense, the active worksites dominated the selection of the GPs and worksites. Thus, a total of 80 worksites, selected from among 10 blocks and 37 GPs were surveyed.

4.4 Selection of MGNREGS workers for the study

Five workers were selected from each active worksite. Firstly, a detailed listing of one group of workers (20 workers) was done to identify their socioeconomic conditions, the status of children in the households, and the total number of school-going and working children. This detailed listing also contained information about the economic and employment conditions of the households. Then, from among each group of workers, only five workers were randomly selected on the basis of the criterion of having children below the age of 18 years. Thus, a total of 400 workers with children below the age of 18 years were interviewed through a structured household schedule. A brief profile of the surveyed households is given in Table 4 in the Annex.

5. Synopsis of the chapters

Chapter 2 of this study explains the characteristics and socioeconomic conditions, including the income and earning sources of the MGNREGS workers. Chapter 3 examines the incidence of child labour, if any, in the case of MGNREGS worksites and also provides details of children working at the MGNREGS worksites, reasons for their work and describes their working conditions, the impacts of MGNREGS on children, primarily in terms of their well-being. Impact has been analysed on the basis of their pre- and post-MGNREGS education and working conditions, and changes occurring in those conditions as a result of the MGNREGS. Finally, Chapter 4 offers some policy suggestions and recommendations for promoting the overall well-being of children in the country.

2 A PROFILE OF MGNREGS WORKERS

Information regarding the socioeconomic conditions of 1,249 workers was collected from the active worksites. Out of the 1,249 workers listed, 400 were interviewed in detail. This section provides a brief profile of the workers based on these interviews.

1. Ethnic profile

Cumulatively, more than 97 per cent of the workers engaged at the worksites were SCs, STs and OBCs. In the Lalitpur district of UP, 39 per cent of the workers were OBCs; 29.8 per cent SCs; 25.4 per cent STs; and the remaining 6 per cent upper caste workers. In Mirzapur district, about 46 per cent of the workers were SCs; 46 per cent OBCs; and 7.4 per cent STs, while there was no worker from the upper castes. In both the districts of Tamil Nadu, the OBCs constituted about two-thirds of the total workers, while the SCs constituted one-third of the total workers. There were no ST workers, as both the districts have negligible ST populations. However, in Nagapattinam district, the upper castes constituted 2.5 per cent of the total workers.

Table 2.1. Caste and religion of MGNREGS workers

		Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
Caste	Upper Castes	6.0	0.0	2.5	0.5	2.2
	OBC	38.9	46.1	62.5	66.8	56.4
	SC	29.8	46.6	34.9	32.7	35.1
	ST	25.4	7.4	0.0	0.0	6.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Religion	Hindu	100.0	87.7	100.0	98.5	97.5
	Muslim	0.0	11.8	0.0	1.0	2.2
	Christian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.2
	Sikh	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey.

2. Gender and civil status

The sex-wise distribution of workers shows that women constituted 96 per cent of the workers in Pudukottai and 87.8 per cent in Nagapattinam, the two districts of Tamil Nadu. Conversely, in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts of UP, only about one-third of the workers were women. This largely follows the state level trend of women's workforce participation. While in Tamil Nadu, the participation of women has been consistently high, it has been consistently low in UP.

Table 2.2. Sex and marital status of MGNREGS workers

		Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
Sex	Male	69.0	65.7	12.2	4.0	29.8
	Female	31.0	34.3	87.8	96.0	70.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marital status	Unmarried	4.0	3.4	1.8	3.0	2.9
	Married	88.5	91.2	95.9	88.7	91.4
	Widow/widower	7.1	5.4	1.8	7.3	5.2
	Divorced/separated	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.3
	Single (male/female)	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N)	252	204	395	398	1249

Source: Survey.

The marital status of the women workers indicates that 91.4 per cent of them were married, while only 3 per cent of them were unmarried. Most of the unmarried women were adolescents and were working to support their family members. In Tamil Nadu, graduate girls were found to be working at two or three worksites, among whom one girl was a graduate in economics and another in psychology. Widows/widowers constituted about 5.2 per cent of these workers.

3. Age group

An analysis of the age group of workers at the active worksites reveals the presence of adolescents aged 15-17 years, who are not permitted to undertake such work under the Act, though younger child labourers were not found. Three adolescents were found working in Mirzapur and one in Pudukottai during the survey. While this number may seem small, detailed interviews with selected workers revealed that the actual number of adolescent workers at sites was higher.

Table 2.3. Age group-wise distribution of MGNREGS workers

Age group (Years)	Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
5-14	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
15-17	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.3	0.3
18-24	9.9	6.9	1.8	3.5	4.8
25-29	17.1	8.3	7.1	12.8	11.1
30-34	16.3	10.3	14.2	22.9	16.7
35-39	21.8	20.1	19.0	20.4	20.2
40-44	11.5	20.1	17.5	12.6	15.1
45-49	10.3	11.3	14.7	11.8	12.3
50-54	7.9	7.8	9.6	4.8	7.4
55-59	3.2	4.9	6.1	4.5	4.8
59+	2.0	8.8	10.1	6.5	7.1
Total (N)	100.0 (252)	100.0 (204)	100.0 (395)	100.0 (398)	100.0 (1249)

Source: Survey.

Overall, about three-fourths of the total workers were in the age group of 25 to 59 years, and this was observed uniformly across the four districts. Furthermore, some 7 per cent of the total workers were in the age group of 59 years and above. The proportion of workers in the latter age group was relatively higher in the Nagapattinam and Mirzapur districts.

4. Literacy levels

Literacy levels observed among the MGNREGS workers in each district were lower than the average literacy figures reported in the Census of India, 2011 for the respective districts. Of the total number of workers surveyed, about half were illiterate; some one-fourth of them were educated up to the primary level; a little less than one-fourth were educated up to the middle level; and about one-tenth of them were educated up to the secondary and higher levels. A few of the girls working at the sites were graduates as noted above.

The gender gap in literacy was noticeable in all the districts studied. The gap was, however, sharper in the two districts of UP than in those of Tamil Nadu. For example, in Lalitpur district, 92.3 per cent of the female workers were illiterate as against 34.5 per cent of the male workers (See Table 2.4). In Mirzapur district too, 92.9 per cent of the female workers were illiterate as against 40.3 per cent of the male workers. In contrast to these figures, in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu, the gender gap was not so marked, albeit it was material.

The literacy rates of the male and female workers as per the Census of India, 2011 for the surveyed districts were higher than the corresponding rates observed among the surveyed MGNREGS workers. To illustrate, in Lalitpur, the average literacy rate was 64.95 per cent, while the literacy rate of MGNREGS workers was 52.4 per cent. The gap was enormous in the case of the female literacy rates. While the female literacy rate in Lalitpur was 52.26 per cent, it was merely 8 per cent among the female MGNREGS workers. The same trends were observed in the other districts as well, evidenced in Table 2.5 below.

Table 2.4. Education level of MGNREGS workers

Education level	Lalitpur			Mirzapur			Nagapattinam			Pudukottai			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Illiterate	34.5	92.3	52.4	40.3	92.9	58.3	52.1	43.5	44.6	43.8	48.2	48	39.2	53.8	49.5
Up to primary	33.3	5.1	24.6	33.6	4.3	23.5	20.8	28.2	27.3	0	13.4	12.8	30.4	17.8	21.5
Middle	21.3	2.6	15.5	10.4	2.9	7.8	14.6	17.3	17	25	23.3	23.4	16.7	17.4	17.2
Secondary and above	10.9	0	7.5	15.7	0	10.3	12.5	11	11.1	31.3	15.2	15.8	13.7	10.9	11.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: M=Male; F=Female and P=Persons.

Source: Survey.

Table 2.5. Male and female literacy levels in surveyed districts

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai	
	Rural	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total
Average literacy	61.80	64.95	69.18	70.38	82.54	84.09	74.97	77.76
Male literacy	74.08	76.41	80.25	80.83	89.31	90.38	84.24	86.19
Female literacy	48.17	52.26	56.95	58.77	75.96	78.00	65.90	69.51

Source: Population Census, Office of Registrar General, Government of India, 2011.

5. Occupations

About 90 per cent of the workers were casual labourers, who were engaged either in agriculture or in non-agriculture sectors. However, there was a discernable district specific pattern in the occupations of MGNREGS workers across the districts.

In the Lalitpur district of UP, those who were self-employed in agriculture also constituted about one-third of the surveyed workers. Most of them were, however, marginal farmers. Another 11.11 per cent of them were casual labourers in agriculture. On the other hand, almost half of the total workers were casual labourers in non-agriculture.

In the Mirzapur district of UP, more than three-fourth of the workers were casual labourers in non-agriculture. A large number of these workers work in mines and stone quarries found in the Rajagadh and Chunnar blocks of Mirzapur district. Due to low agricultural production in most of the blocks, the opportunity for employment in agriculture is available for limited durations. Therefore, casual labourers in agriculture constituted only 15.69 per cent of the total surveyed workers.

Table 2.6. Main occupations of MGNREGS workers

	Lalitpur			Mirzapur			Nagapattinam			Pudukottai			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Self-employed in agriculture and allied occupations	39.7	34.6	38.1	6.0	5.7	5.9	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.5	20.7	3.9	8.9
Self-employed in non-agriculture	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.2
Regular salaried/wage employee in government/private sector	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1
Casual labourers in agriculture	8.6	16.7	11.1	16.4	14.3	15.7	31.3	25.6	26.3	37.5	10.5	11.6	15.6	17.3	16.8
Casual labourers in non-agriculture	51.1	34.6	46.0	75.4	80.0	77.0	66.7	73.8	72.9	62.5	88.5	87.4	62.4	77.2	72.8
Non-workers (domestic, household work and students etc.)	0.6	14.1	4.8	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.4	1.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Survey.

In contrast to the two districts of UP, in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu, more than two-thirds of the surveyed workers reported that casual work in non-agriculture including MGNREGS was their main occupation. In Nagapattinam district, 26.33 per cent of the surveyed workers were also engaged as casual labourers in agriculture. Most of them were employed in cashew processing and other agricultural activities.

In Pudukottai district too, the MGNREGS workers exhibited a high degree of dependence on non-agriculture and public works due to the low intensity of agricultural production generating fewer employment opportunities –up to 30-40 days in a year. Occupational segregation between male and female workers is not marked sharply as shown in Table 2.6.

6. Migration status

There were incidences of temporary and seasonal migration in both Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts of UP. The incidence of migration was, however, higher in the case of Lalitpur than in Mirzapur. In Lalitpur, about 15 per cent of the workers surveyed were seasonal migrants, of which 8.7 per cent migrated for three months and 6.3 per cent for six months in a year (See Table 2.7). About 2 per cent of them used to commute to the city, mostly the district headquarters, for work. In Mirzapur district, about 7 per cent of the workers were seasonal migrants, of which 4.9 per cent migrated for three months and 2.0 per cent for six months. About 2.5 per cent of the workers commuted to the city for work and another 2 per cent of them also used to migrate for more than six months.

Table 2.7. Migration status of MGNREGS workers

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Normal resident	77.0	91.0	81.3	86.6	94.3	89.2	97.9	99.1	84.1	98.3
Temporary migrant (for three months in a year)	12.1	1.3	8.7	7.5	0.0	4.9	2.1	0.9	8.6	0.6
Mid-term migrant (more than three months and up to six months)	7.5	3.8	6.3	2.2	1.4	2.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.5
Long-term migrant (more than six months in a year)	0.6	1.3	0.8	0.7	2.9	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3
Commute to city for work	2.9	0.0	2.0	3.0	1.4	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.1
Others (specify)	0.0	2.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey.

In contrast to the two districts of UP, in Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu, the incidence of migration was almost negligible. It was learnt that people in these districts traditionally prefer to work at home rather than migrating. In Nagapattinam district, however, a few of these workers had started migrating to the nearby city in search of jobs after the 2004 tsunami. The differentiation between male and female workers' migration status was not very pronounced in the two states.

3

CHILD LABOUR IN THE MGNREGS

There was no incidence of child labour in the age group of 5-14 years, and it was only sporadic or negligible in the case of the age group of 15-17 years. This finding is based on a survey of 80 worksites, including 20 each from each of the selected districts of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. It is also based on the interviews of 1,249 workers, who were actively engaged in work at MGNREGS worksites during the survey. It was initially found that only four out of these 1,249 workers were children below the permissible age of 18 years, falling within the age group of 15-17 years. The latter included three adolescent workers in the Mirzapur district of UP and one in the Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu.

However, detailed probing of 400 workers (out of the 1,249 workers surveyed) with children below the age of 18 years in their households revealed that the number of working children in the age group of 15-17 years was actually higher. **Out of the total 400 households interviewed in detail, 32 households (8%) reported that their children in this age group had worked in the MGNREGS at one point of time or another.** The number of households reporting the incidence of working children in this age group was the highest in Lalitpur (15), followed by Nagapattinam (9), Mirzapur (7), and Pudukottai (1). These figures also include children who had worked earlier in the MGNREGS, but were no longer working. However, caution is to be applied as this finding applies only to the jurisdictions studied and may not be generalized.

Interestingly, a high degree of awareness about the prohibition regarding the employment of children (below the age of 18 years) in MGNREGS work among officials and representatives of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs) was displayed, which may be a reason for the low number of children working in MGNREGS. In Tamil Nadu, PRIs were reported as being vigilant in ensuring strict compliance with the Act's prohibition; in UP however, the approach was comparatively lackadaisical. A reason was the sympathetic attitude of PRI officials towards poor families, especially those in which the child was the only earning male member of the household. In such cases, the PRI representatives allowed children to work in the MGNREGS in contravention of the Act.

1. Reasons for working children

Directly reported reasons

Out of the 32 households that reported children working in the MGNREGS, in 17 cases, the children worked along with their parents to support the families, earning minimum wages paid according to the task rate system in the process. Five of them had been sent by their parents to earn for the family while two of them were working as proxies for their parents. Six of these families had obtained job cards in the names of their adolescent children. Two other families reported that since their children do not go to school, they were being sent to work at the MGNREGS worksites.

The reasons for the employment of children under the MGNREGS varied across districts. In Lalitpur district, 11 households reported that their children worked to support parents at the worksites. Two households reported that they send their children to earn for the family while another two reported that since the children do not go to school anyway, they are sent to work for the family. In Mirzapur, the proxy factor and the need to support parents in earning minimum wages were the main reasons for the employment of children.

In Nagapattinam district, six of the families reported that they had got separate job cards for the adolescent workers; of these, two had been sent by their parents to earn for their families, while one worked to support parents in earning minimum wages. In Pudukottai district, only one such case was reported.

Underlying causal factors

Out of the 32 households that reported their children working in the MGNREGS, 14 belonged to the OBCs, and nine each to the SCs and STs. None of the concerned households belonged to the upper castes (see Table 2.1).

A majority of the households (18 out of 32) that reported the participation of their children in MGNREGS works were headed by members who were either illiterate or poorly educated. Out of these 18 households, 8 were from Lalitpur, 7 from Mirzapur, and 3 from Nagapattinam. Two of these households were headed by members who had acquired education below the primary level, three household heads had passed the primary level, while five were headed by those who had completed the middle level. Among them, four had also passed the secondary level.

The main occupation of the households that reported adolescent children working in MGNREGS was casual labour in either agriculture or non-agriculture. Those who were self-employed in agriculture constituted a very small proportion of the households reporting working children in the MGNREGS. The incidence of wage-earning

households reporting working children in the MGNREGS was found across all the four districts surveyed. However, the self-employed in agriculture were found mainly in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts. The participation of children from among self-employed households in agriculture in Lalitpur and Mirzapur was mainly due to the poor income base of such households.

While the number of households reporting children working in the MGNREGS is not high, the number of households reporting children working elsewhere (23.8 per cent or nearly one-fourth of the total households) is relatively high. The proportion of MGNREGS workers' households reporting the incidence of working children was very high in the Lalitpur (44 per cent) and Mirzapur (43 per cent) districts of UP. In contrast, the proportion of such households was very low (at 4 per cent each) in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu.

Overall households with lower social status, low educational attainment levels and limited gainful employment opportunities and choices to develop themselves and their families especially from SC/ST/OBC communities are compelled to send their children to participate in wage work including the MGNREGS-thereby presenting a complex and layered interplay of socioeconomic vulnerabilities that force children into labour.

Table 3.1. Households reporting working children

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	44	44	43	43	4	4	4	4	95	23.8
No	56	56	57	57	96	96	96	96	305	76.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	400	100

Source: Survey.

2. Households reporting children working elsewhere instead of MGNREGS

As observed in the case of households reporting children working in the MGNREGS, most of the households reporting children working elsewhere than in MGNREGS were predominantly from OBC, SC and ST communities. The number of households from different caste categories varied across the districts. However, out of the 95 households that reported working children, only four were from the upper castes, and all of them were from Lalitpur.

Table 3.2. Caste category of households reporting children working elsewhere than MGNREGS

Caste	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Upper castes	4	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	4.2
OBCs	13	29.5	21	48.8	1	25.0	3	75.0	38	40.0
SCs	11	25.0	19	44.2	3	75.0	1	25.0	34	35.8
STs	16	36.4	3	7.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	20.0
Total	44	100.0	43	100.0	4	100.0	4	100.0	95	100.0

Source: Survey.

Furthermore, the heads of these households were mostly illiterate, and only a few of them had been educated up to the primary or middle levels. The number of households headed by illiterate members was the highest in Mirzapur and Lalitpur but in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu two out of the four in each were educated up to primary and middle level (see Table 3.3). This finding indicates that the probability of working children is higher among households headed by members who are illiterate, poorly educated or school drop-outs.

Table 3.3. Education level of households reporting children working elsewhere than MGNREGS

Educational level of HH head	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	25	56.8	32	74.4	1	25.0	2	50.0	60	63.2
Below primary level	6	13.6	2	4.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	8.4
Primary level	5	11.4	6	14.0	1	25.0	0	0.0	12	12.6
Middle level	3	6.8	1	2.3	2	50.0	2	50.0	8	8.4
Secondary level and above	5	11.4	2	4.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	7.4
Total	44	100.0	43	100.0	4	100.0	4	100.0	95	100.0

Source: Survey.

The members of most of these households, in all the four surveyed districts, were casual labourers engaged in either agriculture or non-agriculture activities. However, the households engaged in self-employment in agriculture, were mostly found in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts of UP. Most of the children in these households were working in agriculture either as casual workers or on their own farms. Some of them were also working in non-agriculture sectors. The district-wise variation is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Occupation status of households reporting children working elsewhere than MGNREGS

Main earning source	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	N	%
Self-employed in agriculture	13	29.5	8	18.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	21	22.3
Self-employed in non-agriculture	0	0.0	1	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1
Regular/salaried worker	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Casual labour in agriculture	11	25.0	8	18.6	4	100.0	4	100.0	26	27.7
Casual labour in non-agriculture	20	45.5	26	60.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	46	48.9
Total	44	100.0	43	100.0	4	100.0	4	100.0	95	100.0

Source: Survey.

In the Mirzapur and Lalitpur districts, where the incidence of working children was higher than in the other districts, about three-fourths of these children were involved in agricultural activities, while one-fourth were engaged in non-agricultural work. Whereas, in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts, the children were mostly working in the non-agriculture sector.

Table 3.5. Types of work done by working children

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	31	70.5	31	72.1	0	0	0	0	62	65.3
Non-agriculture	13	29.5	11	25.6	4	100	4	100	32	33.7
Others	0	0	1	2.3	0	0	0	0	1	1.1
Total	44	100	43	100	4	100	4	100	95	100

Source: Survey.

Since most of the children were involved in agricultural work, they were working in the vicinity of their villages. Those working in non-agriculture were commuting outside their villages for work.

This trend was observed across the four surveyed districts.

Table 3.6. Places of work of the working children

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%
Within the village and GP	37	82.2	41	95.3	3	75	3	75	84	87.5
Outside the village	7	17.8	0	0	1	25	1	25	9	10.4
Others	0	0	2	4.7	0	0	0	0	2	2.1
Total	44	100	43	100	4	100	4	100	95	100

Source: Survey.

A large number of these households reported their children had been working before the initiation of the MGNREGS. The proportion of such households was very high in Lalitpur (50 per cent) and Mirzapur (58 per cent) districts. On the other hand, in Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts, the number of households reporting working children prior to the advent of the MGNREGS was low, as like in the present, most of these children had been working in agriculture and that too mostly in their native villages.⁹

Table 3.7. Households reporting working children before advent of the MGNREGS

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	50	50	58	58	6	6	5	5	119	29.8
No	50	50	42	42	94	94	95	95	281	70.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	400	100

Source: Survey.

3. MGNREGS and its overall impact on children

The promotion of healthcare, education and other indicators of well-being of the children of MGNREGS workers are not explicitly included in the objectives of the Act. Moreover, the overall income earned by workers through the MGNREGS is small to have a significant impact on the well-being of children in terms of their health, education and other factors. Table 3.8 shows the average earnings of the household of an MGNREGS worker in the surveyed districts. The average earning of an MGNREGS worker in UP is INR 5,765 while in Tamil Nadu, it is INR 6,977. This varies across the districts depending on the average number of person-days of work for which these households earned an income.

⁹ This is an indicative finding requiring further analysis implying that very young children start work. Assuming that the MGNREGS started operations in all these districts in 2008 and children reported working are mainly in the age range of 15 to 17 currently (year of the study 2013) then it follows that these children actually started working around the age of 9 or 10 (taking away the five years of MGNREGS operations).

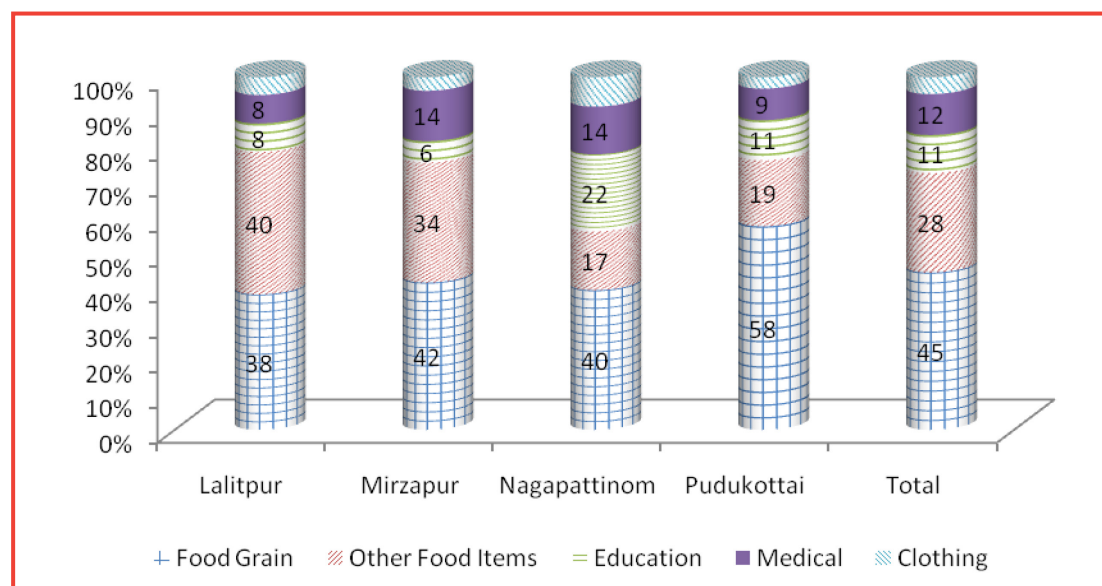
Table 3.8. District-wise average income earned by MGNREGS workers per household for number of person-days worked

	Mirzapur	Lalitpur	UP	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Tamil Nadu
Average number of days per household worked in MGNREGS	35	58	47	61	73	67
Average earning (in INR) per household from MGNREGS in 2012-13	4,372	7,158	5,765	6,626	7,328	6,977

Source: Survey.

Most of the households that seek employment under the MGNREGS are very poor and have very low levels of income and earnings at the outset. A large number of these households seek wage employment under the MGNREGS to meet their basic necessities in terms of food, clothing, etc. Further, their overall low earnings through the MGNREGS do not permit them to spend much on items other than food and basic necessities.

Figure 3.1. The MGNREGS expenditure pattern



Source: Survey.

Figure 3.1 shows that about 45 per cent of the total earnings of an MGNREGS worker was spent on food grains while another 28 per cent of their MGNREGS earnings was spent on other food items meaning that about three-fourths of their income is spent only on food items leaving these households with very little to spend on other non-food items.

Various studies have indicated a tendency among these workers to accord priority to the education and healthcare of their children on the basis of their increased income and earnings. A number of households thus join the MGNREGS to supplement their existing incomes. Households with relatively better economic conditions tend to spend more of their additional incomes on the healthcare and education of their children in contrast to those with a low income base. This study also points to the prevalence of such a trend among the MGNREGS workers. These impacts of the MGNREGS are discussed in the following sections.

4. Change in the educational status of children

A little over half of the households of MGNREGS workers reported a change in the educational status of their children subsequent to the initiation of the MGNREGS. The proportion of such households was higher in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu than in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts of UP as captured in Table 3.9 below.

Table 3.9. Households reporting change in educational status of their children post advent of the MGNREGS

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	37	37	32	32	54	54	78	78	201	50.3
No	63	63	68	68	46	46	22	22	199	49.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	400	100

Source: Survey.

A relatively large number of households reported a change in the educational status of their children in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu which could be due to the following reasons:

- d) the average income base of the households of the MGNREGS workers in these two districts was relatively higher than in the two districts of UP;
- e) the average MGNREGS earnings of these households were higher than the corresponding figures in the districts of UP, as most of them were able to earn an income for more person-days in a year, thereby taking their average household incomes higher cumulatively giving them more flexibility to spend on their children's education;
- f) the relatively higher level of literacy and human development in these two districts are additional factors likely responsible for the change in educational status of the children.

In contrast in the Lalitpur and Mirzapur districts of UP, only one-third of the households of the MGNREGS workers with children below the age of 18 years reported a change in the educational status of their children after the roll-out of the MGNREGS. The main reason for this was the very low average earning under the MGNREGS and low income base of these households. In view of their low income levels, the additional income is spent by households first on food and other non-food consumption items, and subsequently on other items. Nevertheless, about one-third of these households reported a change in the educational status of their children post implementation of the MGNREGS.

5. Nature of change in the educational status of children

A detailed assessment of the nature of changes in the educational status of children shows that a number of households to which these children belong started spending higher amounts on the education of their children. This is largely the effect of the additional income they earned under the MGNREGS, which permitted them to augment their expenses. Table 3.10 shows the district-wise change in the educational expenditures of such households.

Table 3.10. Households spending more on children's education post advent of the MGNREGS

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	47	47	66	66	57	57	71	71	241	60.3
No	53	53	34	34	43	43	29	29	159	39.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	400	100

Source: Survey.

Two types of changes were noticeable in the educational status of children. A number of households started sending their children to school while a large number of others managed to upgrade the schools to better ones. A number of private schools have been established in rural areas in recent years, and the general perception of people is that these schools impart a better quality of teaching than government schools. Therefore, people who can afford the high costs of private schools prefer to send their wards to the latter than government schools. The change in the nature of the schooling status of households of MGNREGS workers is shown in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11. Nature of change in educational status of children post advent of the MGNREGS

	Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
1. Started sending boys to school	10.8	25.0	3.7	12.8	11.9
2. Started sending boys and girls to school	62.2	40.6	11.1	32.1	33.3
3. Started sending boys to better school	5.4	9.4	1.9	17.9	10.0
4. Started sending both boys and girls to better schools	18.9	21.9	51.9	42.3	37.3
Total (N)	37	32	54	78	201

Source: Survey.

In both the districts of UP, a large number of parents who reported a change in the educational status of their children pointed out that they had started sending both their sons and daughters to schools. While fewer households in UP generally claimed to be sending their children to better schools, in both the districts of Tamil Nadu, more parents reported that they had managed to upgrade their children's schools. As such in UP, additional income allowed parents to send their children to schools in the first place; in Tamil Nadu, the additional income was used by parents towards improving their children's schooling.

As regards the items of expenditure on education, most of these households spent significant amounts on books, uniforms, school fees, private tuition and fees related to the change in school for their children. The district-wise pattern for the additional expenditure by the households engaged in MGNREGS work on education is shown in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12. Items of expenditure on education post advent of the MGNREGS

	Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
Private tuition	40.4	3.0	29.8	23.9	22.8
Schools fees	53.2	39.4	49.1	53.5	48.5
Books	46.8	89.4	49.1	73.2	66.8
Uniform	44.7	47.0	66.7	56.3	53.9
Change in school	4.3	9.1	8.8	14.1	9.5
Other	0.0	0.0	3.5	5.6	2.5
Total (N)	47	66	57	71	241

Source: Survey.

Note: Multiple answers.

While in Lalitpur, the expenditure on education was distributed over various items like private tuition, school fees, books, and uniforms, among others, in Mirzapur, the expenditure was mostly incurred on books, school fees and uniforms. In the two districts of Tamil Nadu, the expenditure was distributed across all the four items.

6. Healthcare of children

An estimated 42 per cent of the MGNREGS workers also started spending more on the health of their children. The percentage of such households was higher in the Mirzapur and Lalitpur districts of UP than in the Nagapattinam and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu. The district-wise break-up of such households is given in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13. Increase in expenditure on children's health after the MGNREGS

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	50	50	65	65	27	27	26	26	168	42
No	50	50	35	35	73	73	74	74	232	58
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	400	100

Source: Survey.

During the survey, the researchers came across the poignant tale of a woman worker in Nagapattinam, who broke down while recounting her suffering. She had lost her husband, the main bread-winner of the family, during the 2004 tsunami. She had two children, one of whom was physically handicapped while the other was suffering from some gastro-intestinal problem. She first took her ailing son to the local government hospital, but the treatment there did not bring about any improvement. Then she approached a private hospital where she had to spend INR 30,000 on the treatment yet there too there was no improvement in her son's condition. Her total earnings under the MGNREGS were about INR 10,000-12,000 per annum, which she supplemented with approximately the same amount of earning from other sources. Since her entire earnings were not sufficient to meet the cost of treatment, she had to borrow money but she had no means of paying back the loan. Nor was she hopeful of an improvement in her son's health condition. This case study reveals the apathetic attitude of health practitioners in both the government and private sectors, especially towards the poor population that is engaged in MGNREGS work for subsistence as well as a lack of recourse and choices for adequate health care for MGNREGS workers.

7. Additional measures for ensuring the well-being of children

A few of the MGNREGS households were found to be saving some money for the future of their children. About one-fourth of them saved by investing in the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) or other policies, while another 14 per cent managed direct savings either in their bank accounts or in cash. The percentage of households reported to be saving by investing in the LIC was higher in the surveyed districts of Tamil Nadu than in those of UP.

Table 3.14. Additional measures for the well-being of children

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Saving money	5	5	7	7	24	24	20	20	56	14
2. Investing in LIC/other policies	15	15	17	17	31	31	39	39	102	25.5
3.No saving	80	80	76	76	45	45	41	41	242	60.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	400	100

Source: Survey.

8. MGNREGS and the overall well-being of households

By and large there was general acceptance of the contribution of the MGNREGS to the overall well-being of these households. About 86 per cent of the households in Pudukottai, 73 per cent in Mirzapur, 69 per cent in Lalitpur, and 52 per cent in Nagapattinam acknowledged the overall contribution of the MGNREGS towards the well-being of these households through the additional income generated.

Table 3.15. Additional income from MGNREGS helps in promoting overall well- being of households

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	69	69.0	73	73.0	52	52.0	86	86.0	280	70.0
No	31	31.0	27	27.0	48	48.0	14	14.0	120	30.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	400	100.0

Source: Survey.

9. Adverse effects of the MGNREGS

There was no direct evidence of adverse effects of the MGNREGS on the children of workers engaged in MGNREGS works though there were some subtle repercussions. Possible adverse effects of the MGNREGS on children constitute the following:

- a) a number of households might send their children to work due to increased employment opportunities, which, in turn, might lead to an increase in school drop-out rates;
- b) a child in the age group of 0-5 years may suffer if the increased employment opportunities tempt his/her mother into joining MGNREGS work, despite the fact that there is nobody to look after the child at home in the absence of the mother.

The prevalence of the first factor was found to be negligible in the districts of Mirzapur and Lalitpur in UP as noted above. However, the second factor was found to be prevalent in all the surveyed districts due to a lack of appropriate childcare facilities for working mothers at MGNREGS worksites even though it is a mandatory requirement under the Act.

10. Worksite facilities

Apart from drinking water, the other facilities, including availability of shade, crèche for children, and toilets, were generally missing in most of the surveyed worksites. While first aid was available in 41 per cent of the worksites, shade was available in 15 per cent of the cases; and crèche facilities were available only in one or two worksites of Pudukottai district.

Table 3.16. Availability of worksite facilities in surveyed districts

Districts facilities	Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
Drinking water	85.0	80.0	55.0	70.0	72.5
First aid	10.0	30.0	60.0	65.0	41.3
Shade	5.0	25.0	10.0	20.0	15.0
Crèche	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	1.3
Toilets	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	2.5

Districts facilities	Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	Total
<i>To attend to nature's call</i>					
Go home	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	2.5
In the open	100.0	100.0	95.0	80.0	93.8
Any other means	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	3.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
No of worksites	20	20	20	20	80

Source: Survey.

Surprisingly, crèche and shade facilities were found to be virtually absent at the worksites despite the presence of a number of children below the age of five years and the statutory requirement to establish these facilities. In a number of cases, more than five children were present at the worksites, as the mothers did not have any other family member or neighbour to take care of their children while they were away at work. These children were found to be roaming and playing around the worksites in extremely hot weather conditions. In a number of places in Tamil Nadu, the children had come to the worksites, as their schools were closed for the summer vacation. Their parents clarified that they do not bring the school-going children to the worksites during school days.

In the absence of crèche and other facilities at the worksites, a number of working mothers had to leave their younger children aged 0-5 years in the care of siblings, and sometimes the elder siblings are forced to drop out of school to take care of younger children. Table 3.17 indicates the caregivers for children in cases where their mothers are MGNREGS workers.

Table 3.17. Caregivers for infant if mother is an MGNREGS worker

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Elder family member	6	13.6	3	7.1	14	73.7	44	93.6	67	44.1
Boy below 18 years of age	12	27.3	11	26.2	0	0.0	2	4.3	25	16.4
Girl below 18 years of age	5	11.4	20	47.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	25	16.4
Other relatives	0	0.0	1	2.4	1	5.3	1	2.1	3	2.0
Neighbours	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.5	0	0.0	2	1.3
Child taken to the worksite	21	47.7	7	16.7	2	10.5	0	0.0	30	19.7
Total	44	100.0	42	100.0	19	100.0	47	100.0	152	100.0



In the Lalitpur district of UP, out of 44 women workers who reported having children in the age group of 0-5 years, 21 took them to the worksite; 6 left them in the care of an elder family member, while 17 left them in the care of siblings (12 boys and 5 girls). In Mirzapur district, out of 42 women who had young children, 20 reported that they left them in the care of an elder sister while 11 had left them in the care of an elder brother. Only seven of them took the children to the worksites while three left them in the care of an elder member of the family.

In both the districts of Tamil Nadu, most of the working mothers left their children under the care of elder family members while a few of them also took them to the worksites.

Interestingly, cumulative data from all districts (though there are variations between districts) suggests there is no gender-based distinction in the caregiving roles of boys and girls under 18 years of age as both are equally (16.4 per cent each) involved in providing care to their younger siblings while their mothers are at work at MGNREGA sites. However, as noted above, often older siblings are required to drop out of school for care work and a detailed gender assessment of children who drop out of school for caregiving may reveal a different picture given the prevalent sociocultural gender division of roles.



4 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following conclusions can be arrived at and recommendations made on the basis of the survey of the four districts in two states:

Over the last two decades, the incidence of child labour in India (among children aged 5-17 years) has declined. This decline was sharper between the years 2004-05 and 2009-10 than during other periods. Notwithstanding the declining incidence of child labour, the proportion of working children, particularly in the age group of 15-17 years, is unacceptably high. This high incidence of working children has been found both in the relatively developed and less developed states of India. Child labour in India is concentrated in the rural areas. Even in the relatively developed states like Gujarat and Karnataka, there are backward rural regions characterized by low levels of agriculture, high degrees of poverty, and lack of non-agricultural sources of income. In the urban areas too, child labour is concentrated in particular sectors.

The high concentration of child labour in particular regions, sectors and industries makes it easier to adopt a targeted approach for the elimination of child labour. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure a region, sector and industry specific targeted approach for the elimination of child labour.

The high concentration of child labour in the age group of 15-17 years is related to the continuously high rate of drop-outs from school in the same age group. The existing interventions in education are targeted more towards ensuring the attainment of a universal enrolment ratio for children in the age group of 6-14 years rather than retaining children above the age of 14 years in school. The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, provides for free and compulsory education of children aged 6-14 years. These measures have led to a significant rise in the enrolment ratio and an overall improvement in the educational status of children in the age group of 5-14 years, but not beyond. Thus, the problem of retaining children in schools after the age of 14 years persists. The policy response to achieving an arrest in the drop-out rate in the age group of 15-17 years is inadequate and needs to be revised for ensuring its efficiency.

The incidence of child labour has a strong correlation with the income and economic conditions of the families. Poverty is a lead driver of child labour. The incidence of child labour has been found to be declining with a commensurate increase in the



income levels of poor households. The survey found a very strong correlation between monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) and child labour. A number of programmes have been targeted at eliminating poverty and backwardness among poor people. These programmes, however, need to be either strengthened, converged better or redesigned to make their poverty-reducing effects faster and more effective.

Measures related to the MGNREGS

1. There is hardly any incidence of child labour in the MGNREGS in the case of children aged 5-14 years. However, in a number of cases, adolescents aged 15-17 years were found to be working out of sheer necessity. Some of these children were the only male earning members of the family. Therefore, prohibiting children in the age group of 15-17 years from taking up employment does not help either the children concerned or their respective families, especially when not backed with alternative solutions for families. It has also been found that if these children are not allowed to work in the MGNREGS, they are compelled to seek work at other places, which may be more exploitative and harmful to their health than MGNREGS work.

It is thus recommended a nation-wide survey could be used to identify such families and adequately support them based on evidence and need till the children become eligible and capable of entering the labour market with better income generation prospects.

2. The task rate system has also been found to be a trigger of child labour in the MGNREGS. Most of the children who worked in the MGNREGS were found to be helping their parents earn the minimum wages as per the schedule of rate. Notwithstanding its revisions in many states, the task rate system continues to be unfriendly to workers. The linking of MGNREGS wages to the suitable price index is a welcome approach. However, the schedule of rate needs a more thorough revision. Also, the linking of MGNREGS wages with the price index is negated if the state simultaneously increases the task, as was done in the case of Tamil Nadu.

3. The MGNREGS workers usually belong to families facing extremely vulnerable conditions. These families thus constantly demand an increase in the guaranteed number of employment days under the MGNREGS. It is, therefore, recommended that the minimum guarantee of 100 days of work be enhanced to 150 days, which is not likely to have significantly adverse effects on agriculture.

4. The existing provision of worksite facilities, particularly the availability of shade and crèches for children, needs to be strictly enforced, as a number of working mothers bring their children to the worksites, and the latter need suitable care during the work hours.



5. The process of asset creation can be prioritized with a view to increasing the availability of fodder and drinking water, among other things, in the vicinity of the MGNREGS worksites. This could also prove to be of help to children in the rural areas, who are often employed for such kind of work.



ANNEXES

Annex A. Study tables

Table 1. Characteristics of districts in Uttar Pradesh

Districts	Characteristics				Rank				Group		
	Dropout rate (5-17)	WPR of children (5-17)	Average person-days per HH under MGNREGS	Average person-days earned by women	Dropout rate (5-17)	WPR of children (5-17)	Average person-days per HH under MGNREGS	Average person-days earned by women	Avg. rank	Final rank	Composite rank
Gorakhpur	13.3	13.5	31	8	6	4	3	8	5	1	1
Hamirpur	24	11.2	27	10	1	7	10	4	6	2	1
Jhansi	15.1	4.5	34	13	5	18	1	1	6	3	1
Sidharth Nagar	15.3	7.3	30	10	4	14	5	4	7	4	1
Banda	5.9	10.1	33	12	17	8	2	2	7	5	1
Lalitpur	16.3	8.8	25	8	3	10	13	8	9	6	1
Fatehpur	12.8	15.4	27	6	7	3	10	15	9	7	1
Etah	11.6	20.2	30	3	10	1	5	20	9	8	2
Jalaun	17	7.8	28	7	2	13	9	12	9	9	2
Chitrakoot	7.6	5.3	29	11	12	16	7	3	10	10	2
Jaunpur	4	11.7	31	7	19	5	3	12	10	11	2
SR Nagar/Badohi	2.9	19	25	8	20	2	13	8	11	12	2
Mahoba	6.1	6.1	27	10	16	15	10	4	11	13	2
Sonbhadra	9.7	4.3	25	10	11	19	13	4	12	14	2
Deoria	6.5	8.8	29	5	15	10	7	17	12	15	3
Sultanpur	12.2	8.5	25	5	9	12	13	17	13	16	3
Maharajganj	12.5	11.6	19	5	8	6	20	17	13	17	3
Azamgarh	5.9	9.6	25	6	17	9	13	15	14	18	3
Mirzapur	7.5	3.6	22	8	13	20	19	8	15	19	3
Allahabad	6.7	5.1	24	7	14	17	18	12	15	20	3

Sources: National Sample Survey, 2009-10, and website of MGNREGA, <http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega>, accessed last on 13 March, 2013.

Table 2. Characteristics of districts in Tamil Nadu

Districts	Characteristics				Rank				Avg. rank	Composite rank
	Dropout rate (5-17)	WPR of children (5-17)	Average person-days per HH under MGNREGS	Average person-days earned by women	Dropout rate (5-17)	WPR of children (5-17)	Average person-days per HH under MGNREGS	Average person-days earned by women		
Tiruchirappalli	11.99	8.76	65	54	2	1	1	1	1	1
Pudukottai	11.14	8.47	56	42	4	2	3	3	3	2
Madurai	8.17	7.84	53	40	5	3	4	4	4	3
Vellore	6.22	4.02	58	46	6	7	2	2	4	4
Cuddalore	14.12	4.31	50	31	1	6	5	6	5	5
Nagapattinam	11.97	6.33	47	29	3	4	6	7	5	6
Virudhunagar	4.67	4.67	45	34	7	5	7	5	6	7

Source: National Sample Survey, 2009-10, and website of MGNREGA, <http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega>, accessed last on 13 March, 2013.

Table 3. Profile of selected districts: Population, literacy and sex ratio

	Lalitpur		Mirzapur		Nagapattinam		Pudukottai	
	Rural	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total	Rural	Total
Total population (N)	1,042,907	1,218,002	2,148,058	2,494,533	1,250,291	1,614,069	1,304,800	1,618,725
(%)	(85.62)		(86.11)		(77.46)		(80.61)	
Male population	5,47,870	6,39,392	1,128,022	1,312,822	6,18,594	7,97,214	6,46,800	8,03,337
Female population	4,95,037	5,78,610	1,020,036	1,181,711	6,31,697	8,16,855	6,58,000	8,15,388
Child sex ratio (0-6 years)	913	931	903	929	963	961	963	959
Average literacy (in %)	61.8	64.95	69.18	70.38	82.54	84.09	74.97	77.76
Male literacy (in %)	74.08	76.41	80.25	80.83	89.31	90.38	84.24	86.19
Female literacy (in %)	48.17	52.26	56.95	58.77	75.96	78.00	65.9	69.51

Source: Population Census, Office of Registrar General, Government of India, 2011.

Table 4. Household profile (in numbers)

		Uttar Pradesh		Tamil Nadu		Total
		Lalitpur	Mirzapur	Nagapattinam	Pudukottai	
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Caste	Upper caste	9	0	0	0	9
	OBC	32	45	69	72	218
	SC	32	47	31	28	138
	ST	27	8	0	0	35
	Total	100	100	100	100	400
Religion	Hindu	100	84	100	95	379
	Muslim	0	15	0	4	19
	Christian	0	0	0	1	1
	Sikh	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	100	100	100	100	400
Educational level	Illiterate	48	53	30	24	155
	Below primary	8	7	1	2	18
	Primary	19	19	23	12	73
	Middle	18	12	26	38	94
	Secondary and above	7	9	20	24	60
	Total	100	100	100	100	400
Sex	Male	94	96	20	4	214
	Female	6	4	80	96	186
	Total	100	100	100	100	400
Main occupation	SE in agriculture	26	11	0	2	39
	SE in non-agriculture	0	1	0	0	1
	Regular/salaried worker	0	0	1	0	1
	CL in agriculture	24	25	99	98	246
	CL in non-agriculture	50	63	0	0	113
	Total	100	100	100	100	400
MPCE	Up to 500	18	9	3	0	30
	501-750	34	41	7	2	84
	751-1000	24	39	4	1	68
	1000+	24	11	86	97	218
	Total	100	100	100	100	400

Note: MPCE—Monthly Per-capita Consumption Expenditure.

Source: Household Survey.



Annex B. List of participants to the workshop

No.	Name of participants	Organization
1	Sandeep Mishra	Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi
2	S. C. Sharma	Retired Principal , RLAC DV, New Delhi
3	N. K. Mishra	Professor , Department of Economics, BHU, Uttar Pradesh
4	Gayatri Panda	Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi
5	Sunitha Bhaskar	SED, Central Statistical Organization, Ministry of Statistics and Planning, Government of India
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12	Debasis Barik	NCAER, New Delhi
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15	Ajay Kumar	Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
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26	Ranjan Mehta	Hazards Centre Director, New Delhi
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28	Ruchira Gupta	Founder President, Apne Aap
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43	K. K. Tripathy	Butterflies, New Delhi
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45	S. R. Hashim	Former, Member, Planning Commission and Chairmen, <u>Indian Association of Social Science Institutions (IASSI)</u> , New Delhi
46	J. Jeyaranjan	Institute of Development Alternatives, Chennai
47	Dr. K. Subramaniam	CSD, New Delhi
48	Preet Rustagi	Institute for Human Development, New Delhi
49	Ashok Pankaj	Institute for Human Development, New Delhi
50	Balwant S Mehta	Institute for Human Development, New Delhi
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52	Preet Verma	ILO, New Delhi
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